



CASE STUDY

BAYWATER HEALTHCARE CURES LOGISTICAL SCHEDULING WITH FLS-PRESCRIBED INJECTION OF SPEED AND EFFICIENCY



It's been over three years since BAYWATER HEALTHCARE implemented FAST LEAN SMART's flagship scheduling and route optimisation solution, FLS VISITOUR, for their logistics and field service optimisation of operations. The software has since enabled them to increase their efficiency, solve some significant planning challenges, give a better service to their patients, and win new contracts.

Baywater Healthcare are on a mission to enable more people with long-term conditions to manage them at home rather than in hospital. They provide services and equipment to help patients retain their mobility, independence and quality of life, whilst reducing hospitalisations, thus contributing to a more modern, efficient healthcare system. They work closely with the NHS as well as private practices and serve more than 30,000 patients across the UK.

Baywater Healthcare's patient services include the provision and maintenance of respiratory equipment. This encompasses a variety of activities for field technicians including: installing equipment, replenishing oxygen cylinders, modifying equipment according to patients' or doctors' instructions, removing it when no longer needed, and conducting regular inspections. With over 100 technicians and a high volume of jobs to coordinate, it's no surprise that the way they schedule this work is key.

OVERCOMING LOGISTICAL CHALLENGES

Operating in a time-critical environment presents logistical challenges that Baywater Healthcare's scheduling team need to overcome. Having reached the limits of capability with their existing scheduling solution, it was decided to assemble a project team to evaluate the best systems available for a replacement. FLS were shortlisted and put to the test in a live



Industry: Healthcare

FLS Solutions: FLS VISITOUR

Requirements:

- Complex planning of depot and patient visits
- Precise planning of time-critical maintenance orders
- Automation of the entire resource planning process
- Realisation of individual appointment time windows according to complex specifications
- Route optimisation based on the real road network (Speed Profiles application)

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trial over a two-month period without obligation. This helped them to decide that FLS VISITOUR was the right choice before deployment to their entire field force which was achieved in a matter of weeks.

"We supply a range of specialist equipment, some we use regularly, some is used less frequently" says Craig Lowdon, Customer Services Operations Manager for Baywater Healthcare. "Stock is held in our regional warehouses, but not every piece of equipment is held vehicles. To make sure our technicians have what they need, we must schedule warehouse visits as well as those to patients, but our scheduling solution didn't cater for this. Technicians travelled to the warehouse whenever they could fit it in, which wasn't very efficient. Constant uncertainty of whether they had the necessary equipment made it difficult to determine how much work to send them."

This has all changed since the implementation of FLS VISITOUR. Another challenge is that certain activities need to be completed within four hours.

FLS VISITOUR schedules depot visits and jobs together, planning a technician's entire day in the most efficient way possible.

Craig Lowdon · Customer Services Operations Manager
Baywater Healthcare

Before FLS VISITOUR, the Baywater Healthcare scheduling team operated by way of a 'cluster' system. This involved creating a group of postcode districts with certain technicians assigned to each. It made sure that all technicians in a cluster were able to visit a patient within 4 hours, if required. However, there was no facility for a technician to cross over into a different cluster. This caused inefficiency whenever someone in a different cluster was closer and would have been a better position to carry out the visit.



Benefits:

- Transparency: Exact determination of workloads
- Holistic, fully automated planning of working days
- No extra work due to unplanned absences thanks to re-optimisation within seconds
- Precision and improved punctuality management
- Reduction of appointment time windows for patients and clinic staff from 10 to 4 hours
- Improved patient satisfaction and increased recommendation rate

Meet the organisation: www.baywater.co.uk

"This is where FLS VISITOUR really benefits us," says Craig. "The system takes all of our technicians and automatically assigns them to jobs in the optimal way. When a new activity comes in that needs dealing with urgently, the system will reoptimise all the appointments. It looks at the whole resource pool and automatically adjusts to achieve the objective."

Craig adds that another challenge could be unplanned staff absence, which FLS VISITOUR has also made far easier to deal with. He explains, "It used to be a real headache, operationally, when someone called in sick, and typically resulted in expensive overtime. Now, with FLS VISITOUR, we can simply set the technician as unavailable, and the work is reallocated in the most efficient way within seconds."



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THE RIGHT ROUTES

Another key concern for Baywater Healthcare is making sure that the routes taken by their technicians are the most efficient ones possible. "Routes were being calculated that didn't make sense, because they were using straight line distances 'as the crow flies'" says Craig. "We gave these to our technicians, just to give them a rough idea of the distance. The technicians would plan the actual routes themselves. It wasn't very efficient or optimised, but FLS VISITOUR has helped us improve on both counts. Now we have optimal routes based on the actual roads and predicted driving speeds for the time of day."

Using the unique and very configurable PowerOPT algorithm, FLS VISITOUR optimises both the scheduling and route planning process at the same time. It decides on the best available technician to attend an appointment, and the most efficient route for that technician to take, in combination. It also uses accurate data on road speeds, traffic and other variables to continuously optimise appointments, including changes, if desired, when difficulties arise on a technician's route, so that another technician picks up the work.

NO MORE DRAGGING AND DROPPING

Baywater Healthcare's 'cluster' system for scheduling required a heavy amount of manual intervention. Craig explains, "Some clusters and technicians would end up with a disproportionately high percentage of the work, and we'd have to reappoint them using drag and drop to reassign jobs. It took many hours and was highly subjective, relying on the knowledge and reasoning of the person doing it."

FLS VISITOUR has solved this issue by automating the entire workforce scheduling process and using the PowerOPT algorithm to make the decisions. "Now our schedulers can focus on exceptions and service while the system does the work," says

Craig. "A person just isn't capable of balancing all of the possible variables like FLS VISITOUR can, so in addition to gaining back time, we're achieving much better results."

BETTER FOR PATIENTS AND CLINICIANS

FLS VISITOUR has also helped Baywater Healthcare improve the level and quality of service they offer patients. Last year it facilitated their transition from a five-day service to a seven-day service by making everything they do more manageable. Additionally, its comprehensive scheduling functionality and route planning accuracy have enabled Baywater Healthcare to reduce the appointment windows they give patients and clinicians, from ten hours to four.

"When we couldn't book in depot appointments and only had point-to-point routes, we couldn't accurately determine when our technicians would arrive at patients' homes," says Craig. "Now that FLS gives us properly planned routes and scheduled-in depot visits, we're able to offer a narrower window and give approximate arrival times whilst still being efficient, instead of just 'sometime today'. Our patients really appreciate this."

UNDERSTANDING THE BUSINESS

Craig couldn't be more pleased with how Baywater Healthcare's partnership with FAST LEAN SMART has worked out. He says, "FLS are a great team. Nobody has faded away since we started in 2016, and each of the individuals are really supportive. They are available whenever we need them, 24/7 it seems. Most importantly, FLS know and understand how our business works. That has enabled them to give us really strong support that frequently goes over and above what we expect."



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